

Sports

Montreal drops NY 4-3 in OT

NEW YORK (AP) — Claude Lemieux's breakaway goal at 9:41 of overtime Monday night gave the Montreal Canadiens a 4-3 victory over the New York Rangers and a commanding 3-0 lead in their NHL Stanley Cup semifinal round playoff series.

NHL Playoffs

The Canadiens can sweep the best-of-seven Wales Conference final with a victory in Game 4 at Madison Square Garden Wednesday night.

The winner of this series will go on to the NHL championship round against the winner of the Campbell Conference final between Calgary and St. Louis.

The Rangers, who outshot the Canadiens 12-4 in the third period, had several excellent opportunities to score early in overtime, but they were blunted by the acrobatic saves of Montreal rookie goaltender Patrick Roy.

Most of the overtime period, in which Roy stopped 13 shots, was played in the Montreal zone. But the opportunistic Canadiens, who had only three shots in the extra period, made one of their count.

Mike McPhee set up the winning goal when he blocked a mid-air shot by New York's Willie Huber, roared down the left wing and fed Lemieux in the slot.

The Montreal rookie right wing beat goalie John Vanbiesbrouck high on the glove side for his eighth goal of the playoffs.

The win was only the third in Montreal's last 18 overtime appearances, dating back to last year's playoffs.

The Canadiens tied it 3-3 on Bobby Smith's power-play goal with 2:04 remaining in regulation. New York's Brian MacLellan was in the penalty box for holding when Smith put a backhand from the slot over Vanbiesbrouck's glove.

Bucks out-muscle 76ers, deadlock series

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Ricky Pierce scored 21 points and Paul Pressey 15, and they combined for 17 in the final period, leading the Milwaukee Bucks to a 109-104 victory over the Philadelphia 76ers Monday night and deadlocking their NBA playoff series at two games apiece.


The Bucks, Central Division champions, regained the homecourt edge in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference semifinal series and will meet the 76ers in Milwaukee for Game 5 Wednesday night. The sixth game is in Philadelphia Friday night.

Milwaukee won despite 37 points by the 76ers' Charles Barkley, who received an award earlier Monday as the top player in the NBA based on a computerized evaluation of all statistical categories.

The teams battled through an even first half in which they were tied at 27 after a period and at 60 at halftime.

In the third quarter, the score was tied six times, the last at 76-76, before Milwaukee scored eight straight to lead 84-76 with 1:42 left. But Barkley and Julius Erving hit jumpers to reduce the deficit to 84-80 at the end of the period.

Milwaukee built its lead to 93-86 with 8:29 remaining, but the 76ers again pecked away at the margin until they gained the lead at 101-99 on



PLAYOFF PICTURE

Conference Semifinals (Best-of-Seven Series)

Monday, May 5
Milwaukee 109, Philadelphia 104
Series tied at 2-2, Game 5 in Milwaukee Wednesday

Tuesday, May 6
Denver at Houston
Series tied at 2-2

Dallas at Los Angeles Lakers
Series tied at 2-2

Atlanta at Boston
Boston leads series, 3-1

a three-point play by Barkley with 3:23 left.

Pierce responded with a three-point play of his own to give Milwaukee the lead again, but Maurice Cheeks tied it with a technical free throw on a Bucks' illegal defense.

Then, Pressey converted two free throws after being fouled by Barkley, putting the Bucks ahead for good at 104-102 with 1:46 on the clock.

Pressey, who scored nine points in the fourth period and all of his 15 in the second half, hit a jumper for a four-point lead before Barkley came back with two free throws to make it 106-104 with 46 seconds left.

Pressey iced the victory at the 25-second mark with two more free throws.

Playoff Outlook

The momentum, if there is any, is with Atlanta — but the odds, it would seem, are against the Hawks.

The Hawks avoided being swept out of the NBA playoffs Sunday, beating Boston 106-94 at Atlanta in the fourth game of their best-of-seven second-round series. That, however, only forced the Hawks back into a Tuesday night return to Boston Garden, a most unfriendly postseason place for them.

Also Tuesday night, it will be Denver at Houston and Dallas at the Los Angeles Lakers, with each of those series tied 2-2.

The Hawks are 0-2 in Boston Garden in this year's playoffs. The last time the Hawks visited Boston in the playoffs, they were 0-2.

The Celtics also have a 44-1 record in Boston Garden this season, including a current 35-game winning streak. Although Atlanta managed to finally win at home Sunday after dropping the first three games, they're bucking history. No NBA team has overcome a 3-0 deficit in a best-of-seven playoff series.

"We're going to go in and play our

hearts out again," the Hawks' Dominique Wilkins said.

Kevin McHale of Boston said he thought the Celtics might have subconsciously let up against the Hawks, having won the first three games of the series. "Maybe we felt in the back of our minds that it was over with," he said.

Denver Coach Doug Moe, savoring a 114-111 overtime victory against the visiting Rockets on Sunday, said the Nuggets are "in a pretty good spot right now — but let's not get carried away. There are two games left in Houston, so they're still in the driver's seat."

The Nuggets, down five points with 43 seconds to go in the fourth quarter, rallied to force overtime, then won with some key free throws, holding on when Houston's Allen Leavell missed a three-point shot just before the final buzzer.

The Lakers, the NBA's defending champions, suddenly find themselves in a dogfight against the Mavericks, despite having been 18 games better than Dallas during the season. They were beaten 120-118 Sunday as Mark Aguirre scored 39 points for Dallas.

"We're OK," Lakers Coach Pat Riley said. "We've been here before."

Dallas never has won a playoff game at the Lakers' home, the Forum.

Player of the Year bolts college for NBA draft

NEW YORK (AP) — Walter Berry, the College Basketball Player of the Year, who insisted two weeks ago that he would return to St. John's University for his senior year, said Monday that he had decided to turn professional.

The 6-foot-8 Berry, who played center in college but will be a forward in the NBA, submitted his name by mail Saturday to become eligible for the league's June 17 draft.

"You hate to lose a player like Walter," St. John's Coach Lou Carnesecca said, "but this is progress, this is life. Every player wants to go into the big leagues."

When Berry was named The Associated Press Player of the Year in March, he said he intended to return to St. John's. "Being the No. 1 pick in the draft is the only thing that could change my mind," he said.

And on April 21, he said the deadline to declare for eligibility "is gonna come and go and I'll still be at St. John's." But by the time the deadline had passed at midnight Saturday, Berry's letter of intent was on its way to the league. The NBA said it required only a letter with a postmark beating the deadline to ensure eligibility, rather than a public announcement.

Asked why he changed his mind, Berry said, "All I know in my heart is that I want to play" in the NBA. "No matter where I get picked, I've got to live with it. Right now, all I want to do is get on a team."

"This year was a great one for me, and still I was criticized that I was not top-notch material," added Berry, who averaged 23 points and 11.1 rebounds per game and set a school record with 76 blocked shots. "If my stock would go down a great deal next year, if I had a poor season, they would forget about everything and then where would I be? So this is why I feel I have to go now."

After Berry received the AP Player of the Year Award before the NCAA Final Four at Dallas and said he would not turn pro unless he was assured of going No. 1 in the draft, NBA superscout Marty Blake said Berry didn't measure up to that level.

"He's not ready to play at our level yet," Blake said then. "He'd better stay in school, work on his outside shot, handling the ball, shooting the jumper. Walter is an inside player right now. He can't do that in pro ball."

On Monday, Blake, interviewed by telephone from his Atlanta office,

declined to discuss Berry specifically or any of the other undergraduates until the NBA formally announces their eligibility later this week.

But when asked to rank the best forwards, Blake mentioned Len Bias of Maryland, Chuck Person of Auburn, Kenny Walker of Kentucky and Brad Sellers of Ohio State. And he said he wouldn't include Berry, regardless of whether he was formally eligible.

"When you speak of undergraduates," Blake added, "I don't perceive guys making too big an impact. An impact, yes, but not a big one."

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